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THE PRINCE AND THE PREPPY

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IT'S APRIL IN BERMUDA, and the Southampton Princess Hotel is filled with institutional investors, portfolio managers, executives from Chrysler, Martin Marietta, and a dozen other corporations. Each has paid \$2,500 for four days of sun, sand, and off-the-record sessions with economic policymakers from Washington. Representative Jack Kemp and Senator Bill Bradley are on hand, plus top officials from the Treasury Department and the Federal Reserve. And, in the thick of it all, are the organizers of this gala affair, Rowland Evans and Robert Novak.

Evans and Novak have been together for almost 23 years now, but never have they been so prominent. The Bermuda conference was but one of many political forums they have staged in the last few years, starring the likes of Treasury Secretary James Baker, White House Chief of Staff Donald Regan, Walter Mondale, and Senator Robert Dole. Every week they host a half-hour interview program on Cable News Network, with guests ranging from Jerry Falwell to Geraldine Ferraro. They also contribute two CNN commentaries a week. Novak is a regular on "The McLaughlin Group," the televised tag-team debating match, and he frequently fills the conservative slot on "Crossfire," the CNN discussion show. Somehow the pair also finds time to publish two newsletters and to write several articles a year for *Reader's Digest*.

Finally, of course, Evans and Novak continue to write four columns a week, spinning out breathless tales of bureaucratic intrigue. Here you can read about the aspirations of presidential advance men, the connivances of congressional aides, the interior world of deputy assistant secretaries. Since Ronald Reagan became president, it seems, hardly a critical memo gets drafted or a key telephone call placed that doesn't show up in Evans and Novak. They may well have better sources inside the administration than any other journalists, making their column one of the most closely read in Washington.

Curiously, though, while their star has soared in Washington, Evans and Novak have hit on hard times in the rest of the country. "Inside Report," as the column is called, has lost favor with editors from coast to coast. Anthony Day, editorial pages editor of the *Los Angeles Times*, says he dropped the column when he became concerned about its accuracy. "Inside Report," which appeared in more than 250 daily papers in the mid-1970s, is carried by only 150 today. Here are some reasons why:

December 16, 1981: Evans and Novak, quoting presidential advisers, predict that "Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski will lose his martial law gamble, leading to direct Soviet intervention in Poland and perhaps costing the lives of hundreds of thousands of fighting Poles."

September 21, 1984: Evans and Novak, citing CIA intelligence estimates, report "suspicions of an imminent Soviet move from Afghanistan into the northern tip of Pakistan."

January 28, 1985: Evans and Novak, observing Konstantin Chernenko on his deathbed, write that "Surprisingly, the charismatic Mikhail Gorbachev, at 52 the Politburo's youngest member, is no longer considered the heir apparent."

A survey of more than 250 columns written since 1981 indicates that Evans and Novak, never known for their moderation, have grown increasingly strident. Long forced to sit on the political periphery, they have had the satisfaction of seeing America come around to their point of view. But as the nation has shifted to the right, so have Evans and Novak. Today they champion the gold standard and call Roberto d'Aubuisson a "democratic capitalist." Remarkably, the more outlandish Evans and Novak become, the more their renown inside the Beltway grows.

As a byline, Evans and Novak have been inseparable for years; in real life, they could hardly be more apart. Rowly Evans, 64, is a product of Philadelphia's Main Line. The son of a Quaker insurance broker, he attended the Kent School and enrolled at Yale. After a year mostly spent playing bridge, Evans dropped out of college to work in the Chicago freight yards. After the war he returned to Philadelphia and got a job with the *Bulletin*. He soon went to Washington and eventually took a job with the bureau of the *New York Herald Tribune*. The *Trib* encouraged Evans to write a column, but wanted it to appear six days a week.

To help out, Evans enlisted Robert Novak. Novak, now 54, grew up in a Jewish household in Joliet, Illinois, the son of a chemical engineer. He attended the University of Illinois, then went to work for two small Illinois newspapers. In 1958 he joined the Washington bureau of the *Wall Street Journal* and soon gained a reputation as one of the best reporters in town.

Today Evans's elegant suits and buffed oxfords give him the sleek look of a squire. The aristocratic air is heightened by a high, balding forehead and stylishly long complement of hair in back. Appearances aside, Evans has a relaxed, companionable manner that has made him popular with colleagues of all political persuasions. Three mornings a week he has breakfast with sources at the Metropolitan Club, Washington's stuffiest. He and his wife, Kay, editor of the *Washington Journalism Review*, are known for hosting dinner parties in their Georgetown town house, often with a senator or Supreme Court justice in attendance.

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